



Indiana State
Department of Health

Immunization E-Update

August 8, 2008

Pentacel

In the next few weeks, Pentacel will be available through the Indiana Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. Pentacel is a new combination vaccine that contains DTaP, IPV and Hib vaccine. It is supplied as single dose vials, 5 doses in a package. A single-dose vial of liquid DTaP-IPV vaccine is used to reconstitute a single-dose vial of lyophilized ActHIB vaccine. The vaccine must be kept at refrigerator temperature (35°-46° F) at all times. Pentacel must never be frozen. Vaccine exposed to freezing temperature must not be used.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The availability of Pentacel will improve the Hib vaccine supply in the United States. However, the availability of Pentacel will not be sufficient to reinstate the last (booster) dose of the Hib vaccine series (i.e. the dose administered after the first birthday). Although Pentacel is approved by FDA for the fourth dose in the DTaP, IPV and Hib series, providers should NOT use it for this purpose until there is further improvement in the Hib vaccine supply. **Until the Hib supply improves Pentacel should be used ONLY for the first three doses of the DTaP, IPV, and Hib vaccination series.**

The following is an example of a schedule for DTaP, Hib*, IPV, Hep B using Pentacel for the first three doses:

Birth	2 mos.	4 mos.	6 mos.	15-18 mos.	4-6 years
Hep B	Hep B		Hep B		
				DTaP	DTaP
					IPV
	Pentacel	Pentacel	Pentacel		

Pentacel can be administered to any child 6 weeks through 4 years of age. As stated on the childhood immunization schedule, a **combination vaccine including Pentacel, may be used whenever any component(s) of the combination is indicated and no other component of the vaccine is contraindicated. This means that Pentacel can be used when a child needs one or two components, but does not need the others.*

Contraindications and precautions for Pentacel are the same as those for DTaP, IPV, and Hib vaccine.

Ordering Considerations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has suggested options for incorporating the use of Pentacel into immunization schedules to prevent wastage or missed antigens if a practice uses both Pediarix and Pentacel.

For **practices using single-antigen vaccines**, transition to Pentacel is relatively straightforward. These practices could begin using Pentacel as the first dose in the primary series for their two-month olds. Infants already started on single-entity vaccines can finish the series with separately administered DTaP, IPV, and Hib vaccines. An alternative is to switch all infants to Pentacel.

For **practices using Pediarix (DTaP/IPV/HepB)**, the situation may be more challenging. For practices desiring to use Pentacel, the practice may wish to begin with the administration of Pentacel to their newborns (patients who are 6 weeks of age or older) while infants already started on Pediarix could finish the series with Pediarix.

NOTE:

A one time order for Pentacel may occur outside of your monthly ordering schedule only in August. If you wish to place a special order of only Pentacel in August, please submit your order by no later than August 15.